Joining the Indian Ocean Tuna Organization

1177. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our country has joined the Indian Ocean Tuna Organization;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the objectives and other salient features of this organization?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) is a Regional Fisheries Organization under the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. This Organization is mandated to manage tuna and tuna like species in the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas. India became a member of IOTC from the time it came into existence in the year 1996. Tuna and tuna like species are highly migratory and straddling in nature, moving between the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of adjacent countries and the high seas. Hence, cooperative efforts are required to conserve and manage these resources. Since the objective of IOTC is oriented towards management and conservation of tuna and allied resources, India has joined this Organization for the sustainable development to tuna fisheries in this region through cooperative efforts with the member countries.

(c) The objective of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is to review the trend of tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas by gathering and analyzing scientific information on the resources, maintenance of statistics on catch and efforts and maintaining data relevant to the conservation and management of the stocks. The Commission is also required to coordinate research and development activities in respect of the tuna species covered under it and to encourage transfer of technology, training of personnel and to address the special interests and needs of the member countries. The Commission will promote the objective of optimum utilization of the tuna resources based on scientific evidences. At present, there are 24 countries represented in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the headquarters of the Commission is in Victoria, Seychelles.